The Theosophical FORUM

APRIL 1901

OUR ARTICLES:

	PAGE
THOMAS E. WILSON	221
ANCIENT AND MODERN PHYSICS	225
THOUGHTS ABOUT ART	227
PRESENT DAY THEOSOPHY	232
A SUGGESTIVE BOOK	238

ISSUED MONTHLY

VOL. 6 NO. 12

Flushing
New York

Ten Cents a Copy One Dollar Yearly

THE SONG OF LIFE:

The heart of the Eastern Wisdom, as taught in one of the grandest passages in the whole realm of sacred literature; translated, with a modern rendering and application of the Mystery Teaching, and a Preface on the tradition of the Mysteries.

Cloth, 60 *cents.*

THE MEMORY OF PAST BIRTHS:

An answer to the first great difficulty which arises when we meet the teaching of Re-incarnation: the question why we do not remember our past births. This one doctrine, when realized and understood, will do more than anything else to bring back the golden age, the reign of good-will among men.

Cloth, 50 *cents; paper,* 25 *cents.*

KARMA: WISDOM AND WORKS:

Gives the real meaning of Karma, and a history of the development of the teaching, throughout the occult history of India; and shows in what different senses the word Karma is used by modern Theosophists. An attempt to trace the stages of the revelation of the Occult Teaching in the past history of our race.

Cloth, 60 *cents; paper,* 35 *cents.*

FROM THE UPANISHADS:

A rendering of three dramas or dialogues of the Mysteries, from the Great Upanishads. These passages of the Eastern Wisdom not only convey the teaching, but have the special power of awaking, in all minds which are ready, the power by which the real meaning of the teaching is understood. They arouse and kindle intuition as no other Scriptures do.

Cloth, 75 *cents.*

CHARLES JOHNSTON, Flushing, N. Y.

THE THEOSOPHICAL

FORUM

VOL. 6. APRIL, 1901 No. 12

THOMAS E. WILLSON.

By the Editor.

In March 1901, the THEOSOPHICAL FORUM lost one of its most willing and unfailing contributors. Mr. T. E. Willson died suddenly, and the news of his death reached me when I actually was in the act of preparing the concluding chapter of his "Ancient and Modern Physics," for the April number.

Like the swan, who sings his one song, when feeling that death is near, Mr. Willson gave his brother co-workers in the Theosophical field all that was best, ripest and most suggestive in his thought in the series of articles the last of which is to come out in the same number with this.

The last time I had a long talk with T. E. Willson, he said:

"For twenty years and more I went without a hearing, yet my interest and my faith in what I had to say never flagged, the eagerness of my love for my subject never diminished."

This needs no comment. The quiet and sustained resistance to indifference and lack of appreciation, is truly the steady ballast

which has prevented our Theosophical ship from aimless and fatal wanderings, though of inclement weather and adverse winds we had plenty.

For many long years Mr. Willson was the librarian of the New York "World." In the afternoons he was too busy to see outsiders, but, beginning with five o'clock in the afternoon until he went home somewhere in the neighborhood of midnight, he always was glad to see his friends. He had a tiny little room of his own, very near the top of the tremendous building, his one window looking far above the roofs of the tallest houses in the neighborhood. There he sat at his desk, generally in his shirt sleeves, if the weather was at all warm, always busy with some matter already printed, or going to be, a quiet, yet impressive and dignified figure.

The elevated isolation, both figuratively and literally speaking, in which T. E. Willson lived and worked, in the midst of the most crowded thoroughfares of New York, always made me think of Professor Teufelsdröckh on the attic floor of "the highest house in the Wahngasse." The two had more than one point of resemblance. They shared the loftiness of their point of view, their sympathetic understanding of other folks, their loneliness, and, above all, their patient, even humorous resignation to the fact of this loneliness.

Yet in his appearance Mr. Willson was not like the great Weissnichtwo philosopher. In fact, in the cast of his features and in his ways, Mr. Willson never looked to me like a white man. In British India I have known Brahmans of the better type exactly with the same sallow complexion, same quick and observant brown eye, same portly figure and same wide-awakeness and agility of manner.

Last summer I heard, on good authority, that Mr. Willson had thought himself into a most suggestive way of dealing with the problems of matter and spirit, a way which, besides being suggestive, bore a great resemblance to some theories of the same nature, current in ancient India. Consequently Mr. Willson was offered, for the first time in his life, a chance of expressing his views on matter and spirit in as many articles and in as extensive a shape as he chose. The way he received this tardy recognition of the fact that he had something to say was highly instructive. He did not put on airs of unrecognized greatness, though, I own, the

occasion was propitious, he did not say "I told you so," he simply and frankly was glad, in the most childlike way.

And now that I have used the word, it occurs to me that "childlike" is an adjective the best applied to this man, in spite of his portliness and his three score and more winters.

Many a pleasant hour I have spent in the small book room of the great "World" building. With Mr. Willson talk never flagged. We discussed the past and the future of our planetary chain, we built plans for the true and wholesome relation of sexes, we tried to find out—and needless to say never did—the exact limit where matter stopped being matter and became spirit, we also read the latest comic poems and also, from time to time, we took a header into the stormy sea of American current literature in order to find out what various wise heads had to say, consciously or unconsciously, in favor of our beloved theosophical views. And all this, being interrupted every three minutes or so by some weary apparition from some work-room of the "World" with some such question: "Mr. Willson, how am I to find out the present whereabouts of this or that Russian man-of-war? Mr. Willson, what is the melting point of iron? Mr. Willson, when was "H. M. S. Pinafore" produced for the first time?" etc., etc. And every time, Mr. Willson got up in the leisurely manner peculiar to him, reached for some book from the shelves that lined the room, gave the desired information, and as leisurely returned to the "pranic atom," or to "come and talk man talk, Willy" or to whatever our subject chanced to be at the time.

Mr. Willson's gratitude to the THEOSOPHICAL FORUM for its recognition was disproportionately great. As he wrote to the Editor: "give me any kind of work, writing for you, reviewing, manuscript or proof reading, I shall do anything, I shall undertake any job, even to taking editorial scoldings in all good nature, only give me work." His devotion to theosophical thought and work in all their ramifications was just as great, as was his freedom from vanity, his perfectly natural and unaffected modesty.

At the news of his death many a heart was sincerely sad, but none so sad as the heart of the editor of the THEOSOPHICAL FORUM. For a friend and co-worker like T. E. Willson, ever ready to give material help and moral encouragement, is not easily replaced.

Following the custom of white humanity in all countries in similar circumstances, I put the black border around the first page of this number. Yet I do not believe there ever is any call for all this blackness. Especially I do not believe there is any call for it on the present occasion, as for a soul so pure of any kind of selfishness the transition from the turmoil of life to the bright dreams of death must have been both easy and enviable.

ANCIENT AND MODERN METAPHYSICS.

VIII.

Behind each and every prakritic atom of our earth there are six other atoms (or globes), three material shadows and three spiritual realities, so that it is a string of seven—the whole universe in miniature—material and spiritual. And all things combined and formed on a prakritic base are a chain of seven—whether a peach or a planet.

The "chain" belongs to the prakritic plane. The lines of descent from the Light through the star and sun to planet are "strings." The "chains" are beads of the same size strung on a thread. The strings are beads of different sizes strung on a thread. The beads of the chain are in coadunition—in the same space, as gas in water and the water in a sponge.

In metaphysics this earth can only be regarded as a chain of seven globes, its three astral globes in coadunition having their three spiritual doubles. Of course no one of the higher globes can be seen by the prakritic eye, but that is not to say the astral world cannot be seen by the astral eye in sleep, or by the person who qualifies himself for the astral world through the development of his astral body. "No upper globes of any chain in the solar system can be seen," says H. P. Blavatsky in the Secret Doctrine (vol. 1. P. 187), yet she means by astronomers, not by sages. And she does not mean the upper globes in the stellar system of Alcyone and its companions.

In pure physics the earth can only be regarded as a chain of four globes consubstantial and in coadunition—four in and three out. This makes seven, and the metaphysician when talking physics uses the metaphysical terms interchangeably and speaks of "the chain of seven globes" meaning in one sentence the four material globes making this earth; in another meaning the line of descent or string of beads of different sizes reaching down from the Divine Consciousness; and in still another the seven beads or globes of the same size in coadunition to form this earth chain. To the student who is thoroughly grounded in the eastern physics this interweaving of the physical and metaphysical presents no difficulties; but to the western mind just beginning the study it is a tangle.

We can now see what is meant by illusion, or Maya, and understand why such stress is laid upon it by every teacher.

Take the physical side first. The motion of a top gives it bands of color to our eyes that it does not have at rest. They are temporary and not permanent, a result of motion merely; illusion and not reality.

The motion of the material atoms of the four planes, in harmony with their vibration, a motion the spiritual world does not have, produces all material phenomena. This is of course within the kinetic belts, for above or below them there is no change, and its phenomena are the mere change in relation of one atom to another caused by motion. The changes are not real. They disappear when the motion stops. They have no existence in matter above or below the belt.

All phenomena of every kind are as much an illusion as the supposed bands of color around the top. The illusion is the result of changes of relation in differentiated atoms caused by their motion. Without this motion the four material globes would dissolve into the atomic dust of the manasic world, with all that is within them. The whole material universe is all illusion; a mere temporary relation of its atoms through motion, without Reality or permanence.

What then is real? What is not illusion? That which is beyond the physical, that which is its cause and root; broadly, the metaphysical, which is not the result of differentiated atoms through relation. What was real in the top is real here. What was illusion in the top is illusion here.

The meta-physical or spiritual (the terms are interchangeable) does not have to pass beyond the manasic globe to get on the solid ground of reality. The spiritual world is here in every physical atom and in every aggregation of them; in every planet, sun, and star; for they are seven, each and every one, not four. Behind the illusion of one atom or many, whether here or on Alcyone, there is reality and permanency in the undifferentiated cause, the spiritual archetype, the three higher beads on the string which are the proper study of metaphysics.

THOUGHTS ABOUT ART.

III.

Thus the story of Greek art declares in the strongest terms the inherent and necessary relation between nobility of character and greatness of artistic achievement.

If from Greece we turn to Italy two thousand years later, we shall find the same declaration in a form no less striking and impressive.

Ruskin, in one of his most luminous passages, suggests that when Raphael (1508-1511) ornamented the two principal walls of a state apartment in the Vatican, and did this, moreover, under the immediate patronage and direction of the Head of the Church, he at once marked, by the perfection of his execution, the culmination of Italian art, and by the selection and disposition of the subjects the beginning of the decline of both art and religion.

The subject of the frescoes in question respectively being the "Dispute of the Sacrament" or "Theology" and the "School of Athens," the one an apotheosis of the Church, the other of classical learning, one side the world of theology presided over by Christ, the other side the world of philosophy presided over by Plato and Aristotle.

The two and a half centuries just passed had been a period of great and progressive awakening for Italy in religion, literature, art, and general national vigor.

Venice, having laid her foundations in stern simplicity, in rectitude, in unquestioning faith, had developed and measureably preserved these virtues, and was about at the summit of her greatness. Tuscany and Lombardy had produced the highest types of civic virtue and martial valor. Savonarola had just perished at the stake. Men cherished the loftiest ideals, aspired to untrammeled freedom of thought, and were willing to die, if need be, in vindication of their beliefs.

No single thing observed by the traveler in Italy is more suggestive when thoughtfully considered than the type of face which he finds in the portraits of that time. One sees there the vigor of character, the keeness, the energy, with which he is familiar in the countenances of leading men of American life. In fact the Ameri-

can type of countenance abounds. No such faces are seen among the Italians of to-day.

The progress of this awakening is vividly recorded in Italian art. First, in the thirteenth century, came Niccolo Pisano at Pisa, and, a little later, Giotto at Florence, who in sculpture and painting respectively gave the first great impulses to the Italian Renaissance. Technical perfection, indeed, they had not; but of force, simplicity, purity, consecration, they had no lack. St. Francis of Assisi, whose life had illuminated the opening of the century, was the type, to men of that time, of purity and self-sacrificing consecration; and to the celebration of his saintly life Giotto's best efforts were given. Nowhere can he be seen to better advantage than in his frescoes of Chastity, Poverty and Obedience, the great Franciscan virtues, on the ceiling of the lower Franciscan Church at Assisi. Dante was his contemporary, and with him Giotto stood in close personal relations.

Then followed, among many others, Angelico, dipping his brush in the gleaming colors of paradise and tracing angelic countenances radiant with celestial love, purity and devotion; Filippo Lippi—Credi—Filippino, all reflecting in their faces the beauty and purity of ideal humanity; Luca della Robbia, whom none have equalled in depicting the joy and loveliness of childhood; and Botticelli, at once grand and tender, revelling in the beauty of form and motion, and gazing profoundly into the solemnities of life. Botticelli touched the acme of Italian art. His daring and sombre spirit found little to attract it in the Roman pomp which ensnared Raphael. He executed his frescoes in the Sistine Chapel—of which they are far worthier adornments than the concourse of athletes whom Michael Angelo has exhibited upon the great end wall—in about 1484; returned to Florence; was heartbroken by the tragic death of his friend and master Savonarola, and passed the last years of his life secluded in the monastery consecrated by his memory.

Contemporaneously with Botticelli, Giovanni Bellini did as great or greater things at Venice. One who would know Bellini must see his two representations of the Madonna and saints in the Churches of the Frari and San Zaccaria at Venice. No painting, I believe, in Italy equals the latter for the expression of profound and noble character, of Godlike repose, of heavenly peace.

These are representations of the great schools of noble, earnest and conscientious men who reared the fabric of national art, on which Raphael stood, from which he plunged, and which in great measure he carried with him in his fall. The character of the artists who wrought these paintings, of the motives with which they labored, and the characteristics of the society in which they lived, are clearly impressed upon these works. Nobility of thought and purpose, love for their work and for that only, veneration for the ideals which they sought to depict, are there in poems of form and color.

It is instructive to observe the indifference to money of the great artists of that time. Nothing is better attested. I remember to have seen in the school of San Rocco at Venice, hanging near Tintoretto's grand fresco of the Crucifixion, a work which covers a wall space of about fifty by thirty feet, the artist's receipt for the money paid for the work—two hundred and fifty ducats, equivalent to about two hundred and thirty dollars. Venice was at the time probably the wealthiest state in Europe.

For making the wood carvings in the Cathedral of Amiens (1514—22 A. D.), said to be the finest wood carvings in the world, the workmen received, Mr. Ruskin says, about three cents per day each, while the chief carver was paid in addition about three dollars per year for superintending the whole work.

"One thing prominently taught us," says Kugler (Italian Schools of Painting, vol. II. p. 393), "by the works of Lionardo, and Raphael, of Michael Angelo and Titian, is distinctly this—that purity of morals, freedom of institutions, and sincerity of faith have nothing to do with excellence of art."

Blind, leader of the blind! These men were not the creators of Italian art. They reaped its heritage and stood upon its pinnacle; but it was purity of morals, freedom of thought and sincerity of faith, inspiring generations of aspiring men, which made their achievements possible. Without the foundation laid and the edifice erected by nobler, purer, more devoted men—though not technically greater artists—than these, Italian art as we know it could never have existed.

In his earlier years, at Perugia and Florence, Raphael followed in the footsteps of his predecessors and rivalled, if he did not sur-

pass, them in his productions. Between 1500 and 1508—from his seventeenth to his twenty-fifth year—he produced a great number of exquisitely beautiful paintings. The Sposalizio at Milan and the Madonna del Gran Duca at Florence are representations of these. Nothing can exceed them in purity and sweetness of expression, loveliness of feature and exquisite perfection of execution and detail.

In 1508, by invitation of Pope Julius II., Raphael went to Rome, to assist in the decoration of the state apartments of the Vatican. The Romish Church was then at the Zenith of its spiritual and temporal power. The Vatican was a court combining all the splendor of an earthly sovereignty with the pomp and pride of the vicegerent of Heaven. To glorify this power, to represent it as the centre of the world in all things which concerned the spiritual well-being and intellectual achievements of mankind, was the task which Raphael was invited to undertake. He accepted it; and no one can deny that right successfully did he accomplish it. He created a memorial to the magnificence of his patron such as few princes of the earth have left behind them. He developed marvelous wealth of invention, skill in composition, perfection in drawing, brilliancy in the use of color; and in the twelve years of his life at Rome he executed and supervised a splendid series of magnificent works.

They are magnificent; but they are not the greatest art, not worthy of the promise of Raphael's youth. One cannot study these splendid creations without clearly perceiving that the soul which lived and breathed in his earlier faces was no longer at his command. All the richness of fancy, and brilliance of execution are of no avail; for that is lacking which alone justifies and ennobles art, and enables it to fulfil its end.

After Raphael there was nothing further to strive for. Technical perfection had been attained; and as the fount of spiritual and religious force which had inspired the earlier men no longer flowed freely, artists began to "select," i. e., to imitate. To the imitator creation is impossible; and so it is that since Raphael and his contemporaries there has been no great art in Italy.

The causes of Raphael's decline are not far to seek. On the one hand there was the ambition inspired by the pomp and luxury of the court; on the other the inundation of classical ideals then

prevailing in Rome, which submerged his faith, though too far removed from their source to carry with them the inspiration which had been the well spring of their greatness. By his predecessors the classical spirit had been assimilated. It inspired Niccolo Pisano. Its influence was potent throughout the entire course of Italian art. In Botticelli, of all the predecessors of Raphael, it is perhaps the most clearly evident. But it did not overcome Botticelli's faith. He subordinated it to his religion. All his work reveals a pure and steadfast and aspiring heart. It was not a demoralizing tendency in classical art that corrupted Raphael; it was the *undermining of his faith.* He lost the religious impulse, and with it the power of working from *love.*

Other motives were substituted for the one motive, and the light from above no longer shone through him.

PRESENT DAY THEOSOPHY.

The history of all movements tending to change the thought of the world, whether in the domain of religion, philosophy, or science shows two clearly marked phases of development, each with its own dangers and difficulties.

In the first stage these dangers come from without. Prejudice, conservatism, dogmatism range themselves in opposition to the new ideas. The movement is violently attacked and its adherents subjected to ridicule and persecution—none the less real to-day than in the dark ages, though its forms are changed. If the movement be weak or false, it cannot survive this stage. Like a deformed child of ancient Sparta it is strangled at its birth. But if it is true, this opposition aids it, calls forth all its innate strength.

The sacrifice required of its adherents makes the new truth a living power in the psychic world. For the life of all things comes from sacrifice.

The movement spreads, its ideas permeate all minds, opposition is overcome, persecution ceases, and the first stage is accomplished.

The second brings subtler dangers. No movement in the history of the world has entirely escaped or overcome them. They are of two-fold character: first, the force aroused by, and needed to overcome, the initial opposition, now that that opposition is removed, turns upon itself and tends to harden and crystalize principles into dogmas; second, the ideas that have been sown broadcast throughout the world lodge in strange places, and flower into innumerable distorted minor movements, rooted upon half truths, upon faulty popular concepts of truth. Here is grave danger. For not only do these distorted minor movements, growing like weeds, obscure the truth, but they are themselves at best misleading and often full of positive harm.

The Theosophical movement has passed through its first phase. The world is full of Theosophical ideas. The chief application of Karma, that man's condition is the result of his own acts, not the arbitrary rulings of a semi-personal God, is generally accepted. Reincarnation is discussed and deemed rational. Witness the discussions on immortality that have been appearing in the New York Times. The universality of law, in the spiritual, as well as in the

physical world is now commonly believed, and preached from the majority of Christian pulpits. Through chemistry, electricity, and magnetism, science is pushing its way into the ether, and is gradually accepting one by one our postulates of physics.

These are some of the obvious results of the Theosophical movement of the last quarter of a century—results achieved in large measure through the agency of the Theosophical Society and upon which we well may pride ourselves.

The closing up of the cycle thus saw one great work of the Theosophical Society accomplished, the first phase of its existence finished. The time has passed for active propaganda. That work is no longer needed. Its continuance could only lead to dangerous reactions, to psychic extravagance, to the crystalization of principles into dogmas. The cycle has closed. The new century is upon us, and with the new time comes a new form of work.

What this new form of work may be, and by what means we may best accomplish it, are the problems that confront the rank and file of workers in the Theosophical movement to-day.

I believe a little reflection will give us a clue to the solution of both. History has taught us the dangers we must look for,—obscuration of our principles, by dogmatism from within, by the activity of the myriad distorted movements from without. We are in danger now not from our enemies, but from our friends, not from the rejection of our principles, but from their too wide acceptance—acceptance without understanding, action based upon truths but half understood, or upon but half-truths.

Hence the problem before us divides itself into two classes, one of which concerns itself with these minor movements and our responsibility to the world in this connection. For we are so responsible. They are but outgrowths of the main Theosophical movement. They owe their origin to the ideas which we, as workers in that movement, have been disseminating for the last quarter of a century. We are tied to them by the bonds of Karma, bonds which are a living integral portion of ourselves and from which we cannot cut ourselves away. There is much that is good in them, but there is much that is bad or misleading; a faulty understanding here, a misleading application there. They need pruning, guiding, training. And just in the measure in which we have united ourselves

to the Theosophical movement, do we owe it to the world to fulfill these offices for the outgrowths of that movement.

How are we to discharge this debt? In the first place we must work and study. We must make ourselves so familiar with our own philosophy that we should grow not only able to teach it to others but also able to do that which is far more difficult: find the truth and error of another's teaching. To find the truth in his theories and advance them one step further, to find his error and say "here you are mistaken, and the reason is thus and so." We must study the thought of the time, have intimate personal knowledge of the different mystic movements. We must be men of the world, for it is in the world our work lies. To-day more than ever before is the thought of the world full of mysticism. The tools are ready to our hands, it is for us to guide and use them.

But all this is individual work? Yes it is. Each man "in that sphere of life to which it has pleased God to call him." Study the different movements—write about them—debate them—join them—work for or against them—but remember you do it as individuals, as individual workers in the Theosophical movement. For it is upon the recognition of the fact that all Theosophical work is and must be individual, that the future life and usefulness of the Theosophical Society depends.

We have in the past so frequently overlooked the true character of the Theosophical Society that now we are in danger of forgetting it altogether. The Theosophical Society as such has no beliefs. It stands for no system of philosophy, for no body of doctrines or principles other than that expressed in its objects: those of brotherhood and toleration. It is but natural that during 25 years of activity, of investigation and research, the majority of its members should have become united in their belief in many fundamental principles. But these beliefs are individual and cannot be attributed to the Society. The Society itself offers a broad platform upon which those of widely different creeds and opinions may come together seeking the fundamental truths of religion, of life. And it is in this aspect of the Theosophical Society that its value lies. We may invite to its platform as well as to its audiences, Christian Scientists, Socialists, Spiritualists, men of Science. We may listen to them and learn from them, and, if we be strong and tactful, teach them. But it

is as individuals that we must do this; never forgetting to show "that toleration for the beliefs of others that we demand for our own;" never compromising the Society; never attributing to it a belief that cannot be other than individual, though perchance shared in by every individual member. If for once we abandon this attitude, if the Society as such, gets involved in a dispute, or pronounces itself in favor of this or that view, and we harden into dogmatism, a crystalization which we will find it difficult ever to dissolve. Therefore, you will find in the proposed new constitution of the Theosophical Society a very explicit statement that no member shall have the power to so involve or compromise the Society.

Let us then realize that the Theosophical Society is a magnificent instrument for our purpose but only an instrument: that the work is, and must be individual; and that the Society can only extend to us that encouragement it offers to all workers for humanity, all earnest seekers after truth. Let us realize that Theosophic unity does not consist in our all doing the same thing at the same time, nor in oneness of organization, nor even in oneness of belief, but in identity of aim and aspiration, so that those working in widely different fields by widely different methods may yet be most closely united.

But what, then, can the Theosophical Society as such, do? One most valuable form of activity has just been outlined. It can hold general meetings at which the different mystic movements of the day can be represented. It can invite a lecturer to tell us, say, of the mysticism of Swedenborg, and to enable us to see how the Swedenborgians themselves understand this teacher. Or we may invite a Christian Scientist to come and explain their beliefs, and see for ourselves what are the strong and the weak points of their views. All this will teach us much of the movements of the day, and if we be strong enough, open new fields of work for us.

Those of us who believe in Theosophy need not fear such lectures. If our own philosophy is not wide enough to have room for the truths of others, nor sufficiently deep rooted to be unaffected by their errors, we had better confess failure at once. For, if we are to do our work, we must prove ourselves stronger than all comers,—stronger in heart, in intellect, in intuition.

There is another field of usefulness where the Society may

again serve as our instrument. Though the time for active propaganda has passed, it is obvious that it still is, and always will be, necessary to maintain a centre for the pure forms of the principles of Theosophy,—a centre where those seeking information may find it, where those attracted by the fragmentary truths of this or that semi-mystic movement may be introduced to a broader philosophy, a wider application of principle, a more co-ordinate science of life. Such a centre should exist in each great city, I wish it might exist in every town and village. We in New York should surely form one, and do it through the Theosophical Society.

Let us establish a Theosophical Society headquarters here in New York. Let us hire a room in some convenient locality and have a Theosophist there in daily attendance to answer questions, to give such help as lies in his power to all those seeking the truths of life, let us install there a good library,—all the books we can gather together dealing with philosophy, religion, and the finer forces of nature. Let us particularly stock it with works on the ancient Aryan and other Eastern literatures and religions—those which contain the Mysteries. For it is one of the objects of the Theosophical Society both to promote the study of such religions and to demonstrate their importance. Let this library and reading room be not only for the use of members of the Theosophical Society, but for all who may care to come. If we have the money—and I understand we have,—let us buy sufficient copies to loan these books, so that inquirers may be able to take away with them, this or that book for study. But let us here remember once more the impartiality of the Theosophical Society. Let the student of Zoroasterism and of Christianity meet with equal facilities, equal courtesies. Theosophy underlies all religions and we need not fear it will not be found. Let us give to each that which he wants.

Not only should such a centre exist but the fact of its existence should be kept before the world. The meetings and activity of the Society will tend to this result, still more will our own lives and conversations, but the most direct method is through the THEOSOPHICAL FORUM, which is always open to the expression of any adequate and sincere thought. Its value as an instrument for the new work can hardly be overestimated. By means of it the results of our study and investigation, our criticism and suggestion may be spread

broadcast to influence innumerable minds. Each worker can be kept in touch with the character of the work in distant places, can receive through it suggestion and encouragement. Its very existence is a continual plea to us to throw off our lethargy, and once more to work and to study, to give others the benefit of that study. Are the problems of life all solved? Is the millenium come down upon the earth that we supinely sit and ask what there is for us to do?

The whole world cries aloud to us with a voice we can no longer pretend not to hear. We are now to guide the forces we have quickened into activity. I say, therefore, that there is no lack of work to do, no lack of instruments through which to do it. All that is needed is the individual initiative and work. Let us all read, think, and live Theosophy and the problem of the Theosophical Society is solved.

A SUGGESTIVE BOOK.

Edward Carpenter's "From Adam's Peak to Elephanta" is by no means a new book, yet in rereading it lately, I found it so suggestive, that I wish other readers of the THEOSOPHICAL FORUM would do as much. For instance, what more ripe, more just, more profound than his chapter on the "Consciousness without Thought?"

Here are a few passages from it:

"It is very easy to assume, and very frequently assumed, in any case where a person is credited with the possession of an unusual faculty, that such person is at once lifted out of our sphere into a supernatural region, and possesses every faculty of that region. If for instance he or she is or is supposed to be clairvoyant, it is assumed that *everything* is or ought to be known to them; or if the person has shown what seems a miraculous power at any time or in any case, it is asked by way of discredit why he or she did not show a like power at other times or in other cases. Against all such hasty generalisations it is necessary to guard ourselves. If there is a higher form of consciousness attainable by man than that which he for the most part can claim at present, it is probable, nay certain, that it is evolving and will evolve but slowly, and with many a slip and hesitant pause by the way. In the far past of man and the animals consciousness of sensation and consciousness of self have been successively evolved—each of these mighty growths with innumerable branches and branchlets continually spreading. At any point in this vast experience, a new growth, a new form of consciousness, might well have seemed miraculous. What could be more marvelous than the first revealment of the sense of sight, what more inconceivable to those who had not experienced it, and what more certain than that the first use of this faculty must have been fraught with delusion and error? Yet there may be an inner vision which again transcends sight, even as far as sight transcends touch. It is more than probable that in the hidden births of time there lurks a consciousness which is not the consciousness of sen-

sation and which is not the consciousness of self—or at least which includes and entirely surpasses these—a consciousness in which the contrast between the *ego* and the external world, and the distinction between subject and object, fall away. The part of the world into which such a consciousness admits us (call it *supramundane* or whatever you will) is probably at least as vast and complex as the part we know, and progress in that region at least equally slow and tentative and various, laborious, discontinuous, and uncertain. There is no sudden leap out of the back parlor onto Olympus; and the routes, when found, from one to the other, are long and bewildering in their variety.

And of those who do attain to some portion of this region, we are not to suppose that they are at once demi-gods, or infallible. In many cases indeed the very novelty and strangeness of the experiences give rise to phantasmal trains of delusive speculation. Though we should expect, and though it is no doubt true on the whole, that what we should call the higher types of existing humanity are those most likely to come into possession of any new faculties which may be flying about, yet it is not always so; and there are cases, well recognized, in which persons of decidedly deficient or warped moral nature attain powers which properly belong to a high grade of evolution, and are correspondingly dangerous thereby. . . . .

With these little provisos then established I think we may go on to say that what the Gñáni seeks and obtains is a new order of consciousness—to which for want of a better we may give the name *universal* or *cosmic* consciousness, in contradistinction to the individual or special bodily consciousness with which we are all familiar. I am not aware that the *exact* equivalent of this expression "universal consciousness" is used in the Hindu philosophy; but the *Sat-chit-ánanda Brahm* to which every yogi aspires indicates the same idea: *sat,* the reality, the all pervading; *chit,* the knowing, perceiving; *ánanda,* the blissful—all these united in one manifestation of Brahm.

The West seeks the individual consciousness—the enriched mind, ready perceptions and memories, individual hopes and fears, ambitions, loves, conquests—the self, the local self, in all its phases and forms—and sorely doubts whether such a thing as an universal

consciousness exists. The East seeks the universal consciousness, and in those cases where its quest succeeds individual self and life thin away to a mere film, and are only the shadows cast by the glory revealed beyond."

CONVENTION NOTICE.

The annual Convention of the Theosophical Society in America will be held at Indianapolis, Ind., on Sunday, April 28, 1901.

Headquarters will be at the Hotel English, and the sessions of the Convention will be at the Assembly Room of the Hotel. The Hotel is on the European plan, and good rooms can be had for $1.00 per day.

Branch Societies are requested to send delegates when possible. Proxies may be sent to W. P. Adkinson, 209 E. Washington street, Indianapolis. Individual members, or members at large, are urged to be present. The proposed change in the Constitution is a matter of interest to all, and a full representation is exceedingly desirable. The time has come for a renewal of energy on new lines, in support of the changeless principles that underly the Theosophical movement.

By order of the Executive Committee,

J. D. BUCK, Pres., T. S. A.

A SHORT LIST OF THEOSOPHICAL WORKS.

Books marked with * are suitable for beginners.

THE SECRET DOCTRINE, *H. P. Blavatsky*, 2 Vols. and Index ; cloth..	$12.50
THE SECRET DOCTRINE, *H. P. Blavatsky*, Vol. II., cloth.....	5.00
*ESOTERIC BUDDHISM, *A. P. Sinnett*, cloth.....	1.25
A STUDY OF MAN, *J. D. Buck*, half russia.....	2.50
*THE OCEAN OF THEOSOPHY, *Wm. Q. Judge*, paper, 25c.; cloth.....	.50
THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE, *H. P. Blavatsky*, cloth, 50c.; leather...	.75
LIGHT ON THE PATH, *M. C.*, paper, 25c.; cloth, 40c.; leather, 75c.; morocco	1.00
OF COMMUNION WITH GOD, *Kenneth S. Guthrie*, paper, 35c.; cloth...	.50
*THE NATURE AND AIM OF THEOSOPHY, *J. D. Buck*, cloth..... ..	.75
*REINCARNATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, *James M. Pryse*, paper, 25c.; cloth.....	.50
THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT, *James M. Pryse*, paper, 25c.; cloth....	.50
*KEY TO THEOSOPHY, *H. P. Blavatsky*, cloth.....	2.00
THROUGH THE GATES OF GOLD, *M. C.*, cloth.....	.50
*A SHORT VIEW OF GREAT QUESTIONS, *O. J. Smith*, paper, 25c.: cloth	.50
NATURE'S FINER FORCES, *Rama Prasad*, cloth.....	1.50
REGENERATION: THE GATE OF HEAVEN, *Kenneth S. Guthrie*, cloth	1.50
REGENERATION APPLIED, *Kenneth S. Guthrie*, cloth.....	1.50
*ETIDORPHA, *John U. Lloyd*, cloth.....	2.00
ARIUS THE LIBYAN, paper, 50c.; cloth.....	1.00
MYSTIC MASONRY, *J. D. Buck*, cloth.....	1.50
CHRISTOS, *J. D. Buck*, cloth.....	.60
SOME MODERN FAILINGS, *Che-Yew-Tsang*, paper.....	.10
FRAGMENTS OF A FAITH FORGOTTEN, *G. R. S. Mead*, cloth.....	3.50
*BROTHERHOOD, NATURE'S LAW, *B. Harding*, paper, 20c., cloth....	.40
THE BOOK OF ENOCH, *Geo. H. Schodde*, cloth.....	1.50
JOB, ECCLESIASTES, AND THE CANTICLES, trans. by *G. R. Noyes*, cloth	1.25
"SAYINGS OF JESUS" (Oxyrhynchus *Logia Iesou*), boards.....	.50
THE PHILOSOPHY OF PLOTINOS, *Kenneth S. Guthrie*, paper.....	.50
RAJA YOGA, *Vivekananda*, cloth.....	1.50
THE VICTORY OF THE WILL, *Victor Charbonnel*, cloth.....	1.50
THE ELIXIR OF LIFE, *G. M.*, paper.....	.15
A MODERN PANARION, *H. P. Blavatsky*, cloth.....	2.50
TAO-TEH-KING, *Paul Carus*. cloth.....	3.00
THE IDYL OF THE WHITE LOTUS, *M. C.*, cloth.....	1.50
*THE OCCULT WORLD, *A. P. Sinnett*, cloth.....	1.25
IN TUNE WITH THE INFINITE, *Ralph Waldo Trine*, cloth.....	1.25
THE KORAN OF MOHAMMED, *Geo. Sale*, cloth, 1.00; half calf.....	2.00
A SCIENTIFIC DEMONSTRATION OF A FUTURE LIFE, *T. J. Hudson*, cloth.....	1.50
FIVE YEARS OF THEOSOPHY, cloth.....	3.25
ISIS UNVEILED, *H. P. Blavatsky*, 2 Vols. (second-hand, but in perfect condition; one set only), cloth.....	9.50

All books postpaid. Send for our latest catalogue of Theosophical works, mailed free on application. Any current book furnished, and search made for scarce and out of print works.

ELLIOTT B. PAGE, & CO., 415 PARK ROW BUILDING, N. Y. CITY.
Printed at the office of the Flushing Journal.

GTU Library
3 2400 00268 5182

THREE DAY

v.6
1900/01

452496

Theosophical Forum

v.6
1900.01

Graduate Theological Union
Library
2400 Ridge Road
Berkeley, CA 94709

OEMCO